



# Chambers's Journal

## SIXTH SERIES.

### REMINISCENCES.

By Lieutenant-Colonel Sir R. LAMBERT PLAYFAIR, K.C.M.G.

#### III.—AFFAIRS IN SOMALI-LAND.

THE first serious difficulties we had with the Somali coast resulted from the unprovoked outrage on Captain Burton's expedition in 1854. The story has often been published; I will only mention that in consequence of the outrage certain demands were made on the Somalis, and enforced by a blockade of Berbera during an entire year. When at length the blockade was raised I was sent over to conclude a treaty, in which our demands were embodied. One of these was: 'The traffic in slaves shall cease for ever; and any slaves who, contrary to this engagement, shall be introduced into the said territories shall be delivered up to the British; and the commander of any vessel of Her Majesty's or of the H.E.I.C.'s navy shall have the power of demanding the surrender of such slaves, and of supporting the demand by force of arms if necessary.'

For several years this engagement was successfully evaded. At last it reached our ears that not only was the slave-trade being carried on as briskly as ever, but that it had assumed a new and most revolting character. The masters of vessels from the south-east coast of Arabia, who congregated there for the annual fair, not satisfied with the purchase of Abyssinian and Galla slaves, were in the habit of kidnapping Somali girls, on the plea of pretended marriage. In March 1860 I was sent over to the Somali coast, in the *Lady Canning*, to inquire into this matter. I had absolute proof of three girls having been thus kidnapped; and I learnt that, to guard against the possibility of their capture by our vessels, they had been sent overland to Kurrem, where their purchasers intended to call for them on their way home. Thither I went. I sent for the chief elder of the place, and pointed out the disgrace they were bringing on themselves by consenting to the sale of their own people—free girls—a crime particu-

larly heinous in the eyes of good Mohammedans. Of course they denied all knowledge of the facts, and averred that, as far as they knew, the girls had been legally married, and had been sent by their husbands to await their arrival. I knew they lied, and insisted on the girls being delivered up to me. They refused; and it was not till I had threatened that the vessel would open fire upon their fort that they came to their senses and the captives were brought on board.

Just as we were on the point of leaving I received information that a large number of girls in like evil case were at the neighbouring port of Siyarrah, and I determined, if it were possible, to effect their liberation also. We steamed into the harbour, and anchored close to the fort. All the arguments of the previous day had to be gone over again; and it was not till a similar threat had been made that the elders promised to surrender the girls that had been sent to them for safe custody. They swore by the solemn 'oath of divorce' that there were only sixteen, and these were sent on board. The girls on arrival informed me that there were eight more, and these also I demanded. To ensure my demand being complied with I requested the commander to send a boat on shore, to seize the first six men they could lay hands on, and to detain them till the girls were sent on board. At the same time a shot from the *Lady Canning*, fired wide of the fort, but near enough to be unpleasant, lent strength to my demand; and in all twenty-four girls were delivered up to me at this place. They were all pretty young creatures of from twelve to sixteen years of age, and all told the same tale: that they had been inveigled by their relatives into the possession of the Arab slave-dealers by a simulated marriage, and then sent off to Siyarrah to await shipment. The joy they experienced was unmistakable, and hardly more than my own at having been the means of restoring them to freedom. Once

more, as we were about to leave, a messenger, who had been formerly a Sepoy in the Aden police, arrived at Siyarrah, where he had heard I was ; he informed me that a large Arab slave-vessel was then making its way to Kurrem. We went there at once, and found her anchored about twenty miles east of Siyarrah. All the slaves had been landed under charge of the *nacoda* or master and part of the crew. I had eight Somali attendants with me, and these men were armed and sent on shore to track the fugitives. They found them, and brought them back before 10 P.M. The vessel belonged to a son of the chief of Amulgavine, in the Persian Gulf, who had purchased or kidnapped at Berbera a number of slave boys and girls, all of whom we captured. The boat and her crew were sent to Aden for adjudication.

We then went to Berbera. There the *Lady Canning* captured the sister boat, belonging to the same owner. I learnt that a caravan had arrived from Harrar, with a vast number of slaves. I could not ignore their presence, yet we felt powerless to take them from the shore, with the small crew of the *Lady Canning*, in presence of twenty thousand armed Somalis. I demanded their surrender, however, and I was strongly supported by one Hadji Jamāa, a man of great repute for learning and sanctity, who went about from tribe to tribe in the capacity of teacher and peacemaker. He openly declared that though the traffic in slaves was lawful in accordance with Mohammedan law, yet to them it was unlawful, as they had made a solemn pledge not to engage in it ; but that nothing else save a breach of treaty could be expected from people who so far forgot their religion as to sell their own daughters into slavery. Of course they refused to surrender the slaves, and nothing remained for me but to take precautions that they should not be embarked. I therefore warned every boat to leave Berbera within twenty-four hours ; and, as I had to replace Brigadier Coghlan at Aden, I returned there. The *Lady Canning*, however, returned to the Somali coast, and captured twenty-two more slaves. The total number thus rescued was one hundred and forty. This was all plain sailing in comparison with the task that devolved on me afterwards : What was to be done with one hundred and forty slaves, most of them young and attractive girls ? One or two of the youngest were sent to missionary orphanages at Bombay, and a few more were taken as servants by English ladies at Aden. There appeared nothing for it but to marry off the remainder as best we could. But a very unexpected difficulty occurred. The Kadi, an exceedingly devout and learned theologian, declared that, according to Mohammedan law, the institution of slavery was perfectly legal. We, who had brute force on our side, had declared it to be the contrary, and had rescued these girls from their lawful owners ; therefore he

could not conscientiously marry them ; he was quite willing to do so if he could find a text of the Koran to justify him. I told him that I thoroughly appreciated his scruples, but if he failed in his search he would certainly cease to be Kadi of Aden. The text was found !

In October 1858 I was sent on a punitive expedition to the African coast in H.M.S. *Chesapeake*. The circumstances requiring an example to be made were, as far as we knew, the following : In January the British barque *Telegraph*, of Bristol, from Aden bound for the Kooria Mooria Islands, when coasting along the African shore had been piratically seized by the Somalis of Ourbeh. The master and crew, driven from the brig, and forced to leave her in an open boat, without water or provisions, were picked up by the H.E.I.C.'s ship *Elphinstone*, and brought to Aden. The officer commanding that ship was sent by General Coghlan to exact satisfaction for the outrage, and, if possible, to recover the brig. He went, bombarded the town, and, finding the ship hopelessly stranded, set her on fire and returned to Aden. The punishment inflicted by the *Elphinstone* appeared scarcely commensurate with the offence ; but no more was possible by means of a small sailing-vessel on that dangerous coast. I was therefore sent in H.M.S. *Chesapeake* to inquire more fully into the circumstances of the case, and to act as might appear necessary. On the 7th October we sighted a town which we took to be Ourbeh, and the *Chesapeake* began to prepare for action. Fortunately, as it turned out, we had passed Ourbeh, and the town we had mistaken for it was Bunder Murayeh, eight or ten miles farther east. Seeing a boat put off to the steamer, we lay to, and were not a little surprised to observe two English sailors in her. As soon as they came on board they informed us that they were part of the crew of the barque *Henry Tanner*, which had been wrecked at Ras Hafoon, and that seven of their companions remained on shore. No sooner had the vessel struck than she began to break up ; the boats were stove in, but eight men managed to get on shore on spars. The master and four others were drowned. The survivors found about one hundred Somalis on shore, who treated them with the greatest kindness. The natives themselves had little to offer except a few fish ; but they made them a hut of brushwood, and there the whole party remained for about six weeks in a very miserable condition. The Somalis had a small boat, and, when the weather permitted, they loaded it with gum and mats and some of the copper from the wreck, and took the seamen with them to Alloola, a small port west of Cape Guardafui. There they were treated most hospitably, and distributed amongst the inhabitants, who fed them as well as they could. They were then passed on from place to place, on foot, till they arrived at Murayeh, where we received them

on board the *Chesapeake*. At Murayeh they were especially well cared for, and fed with the best that the village afforded.

It was manifestly impossible for us to take on board a party of distressed seamen who had been so well treated by the very poor natives of this coast and proceed to destroy one of their towns. I went on shore to inquire into the matter, and had an interview with the chief men of the place. The account they gave of the so-called piratical seizure of the *Telegraph* was quite different to that which had reached us. They stated that when the vessel grounded, a number of Somalis went alongside to proffer assistance; the two parties could not, of course, make themselves understood; and the crew, alarmed for their safety, took to their boat and escaped. The Somalis then collected all the movable property they could find on board and stored it on shore, thinking that we should send for it from Aden. On the arrival of the *Elphinstone* they were eager to deliver it up, but that vessel, without making any inquiries, at once proceeded to fire upon the town. The natives at first thought that she was saluting them; but on seeing the shot strike the town they dispersed, and the property was eventually carried away by the natives and Arab traders. I was quite disposed to accept this explanation for many reasons. I liberally rewarded the natives who had succoured our countrymen, and bade them repeat to all their tribe that kindness shown to distressed British subjects would always meet with reward.

The last mission on which I went from Aden was to the same part of the Somali coast as that where the *Telegraph* had been wrecked. In October 1862 news reached us from Makulla, on the Arabian coast, that a massacre of English seamen had occurred near Cape Guardafui. I immediately left for Makulla in H.M.S. *Semiramis*, of the Indian navy. Almost immediately after anchoring, a steamer was observed making for the port; she proved to be H.M.S. *Penguin*, commanded by Lieutenant M'Hardy, which had come from Zanzibar in search of two missing boats. It appeared that on the 1st of September, Lieutenant M'Hardy, then at Kiama (lat. 0° 44' S.) had despatched a cutter and whaleboat to search for slavers between Juba River and Port Durnford, with orders to meet at the latter place in fourteen days. The cutter was commanded by Lieutenant Fountaine, with whom were a quartermaster and eight men. The whaler contained the gunner's mate and eight men; in all, the expedition consisted of fifteen souls. Lieutenant M'Hardy, alarmed at the long absence of his men, followed them up the coast, and eventually went to Makulla, where we met him. On the evening of the 23d we left that port with the *Penguin* in tow, and proceeded to Bunder Murayeh, the most important place on the eastern coast of Somaliland. It belongs to the Mejerteyn tribe, the Sultan

of which is the only hereditary prince in north-east Africa; he sometimes resides in Murayeh, but more frequently at a watering-place two days' journey to the south. Both this place and Ourbeh, which have been before mentioned, are situated on a narrow strip of sand, here and there widening out into bays, which intervene between the sea and a lofty, precipitous range of hills producing great quantities of frankincense, gum-arabic, and various other gums and resins; in fact, the *Thurifera Regio* of the ancients. My great desire was to see the Sultan, who was absent in the interior; and I at once despatched a messenger begging him to meet me, at as early a date as possible, somewhere on the coast.

The natives of this place admitted that the crew of one boat, containing fifteen European seamen, had been murdered on their coast; and, as the Sultan could not be expected before nine days, we started in search of the place where the atrocity was committed. One of the principal inhabitants volunteered to guide us. Lieutenant M'Hardy came with us in the *Semiramis*, leaving his own vessel at Bunder Murayeh. We anchored about fifteen miles west of Ras Asseer, or Cape Guardafui, at a place called Baraida, a rather extensive plain enclosed between the sea and a semi-circular chain of hills; and within a very short time after landing we had ample proof that here our unfortunate countrymen had perished. At almost every step some trace of them met our eyes: here a scrap of canvas, there a morsel of clothing, and in the middle of the bay we clearly saw where the boat had been pulled ashore above high-water mark. Close by a fire was lighted with fragments of the *Penguin's* cutter, which showed that the natives had been on the spot just before our arrival. Proceeding about a mile inland, we reached a small village of mat-huts, in every one of which were articles belonging to the ill-fated party, such as oars, ammunition-boxes, a pair of parallel rulers, a paint-brush, and a seaman's hat-ribbon with the inscription *Narcissus*—the Admiral's flagship, to which the *Penguin* was tender—many of them stained with blood. The people of the village had fled at our approach. We burnt every hut and every article of property we could find. After this we went to Alloola, where I found several people having some knowledge of the affair.

As far as could be gathered from such sources of information, it appeared that the two boats, after having left Magadosha, proceeded northwards, no doubt in pursuit of slave-vessels, but certainly to such a distance as to preclude all hope of being able to return, and they were compelled by the violence of the monsoon to run before it. They called at Ras Mäaber (lat. 0° 29' N.), and here the cutter anchored at some little distance from the beach, while the whaler went on shore for water. Through some unexplained misunderstanding between the whaler's crew and the

natives, several of the latter were wounded, if not killed. The former were compelled to seek safety by flight. They abandoned their boat on shore, and, jumping into the water, swam off to the cutter. Both crews, in the one remaining boat, continued their course northward, and after rounding Cape Guardafui, anchored off Baraida. The boat arrived here on the 28th September; and, as it had originally only fourteen days' provisions, it is by no means improbable that the crews were much exhausted by hunger, thirst, and fatigue.

There is no means of knowing what took place here. A misunderstanding of some kind must have occurred, and perhaps the necessary precaution which the seamen adopted of keeping their arms in readiness might have been interpreted as an intention to commence hostilities. But whatever the cause, the Somalis attacked the boat in overpowering numbers; and it is said that when some of them had been killed, and the Somalis were in the act of dragging the boat on to the beach, the rest jumped into the sea. They were prevented by the natives from landing. Some were speared in the water. Only one, a strong swimmer, succeeded in rounding a cape about half a mile distant, where, landing, he fled towards the east. On the way he met two Somalis, who took him to Asseer, where they made him over to a merchant of Alloola for a ransom of ten dollars. This man, by his own account, engaged four Somalis to conduct the seaman overland to Alloola; on his way he was met by a party of the same people who had murdered his shipmates, and he also shared their fate.

I found it impossible to ascertain the motives which prompted this massacre. There was no time to take them into consideration; prompt retribution was necessary while the tragedy was still fresh in men's minds. I felt sure that the Sultan himself was guiltless in the matter. He had on too many occasions proved his fidelity to us, and shown too much hospitality to British sailors wrecked on his coasts, to be lightly suspected; but he and his advisers would have been accomplices after the act if they failed to cause justice to be done. However strong his desire, he had not the power to do so unless he could plead a considerable amount of pressure as a justification to his people; so I resolved to demand the surrender and execution of the culprits, failing which every village on his coasts within range of the ships' guns would be destroyed.

On the 2d November the Sultan arrived, and next morning I had an interview with him. The result of the meeting was quite satisfactory. He showed himself the just ruler and firm friend of the English that we had ever believed him to be. He did not attempt to palliate the atrocity, or to accuse the English sailors of having commenced

the affray; he readily admitted its enormity, his sorrow for it, and his desire to cause justice to be done. He stated his determination to march against the murderers that night, and he specified ten days as the time within which he could ensure their capture. This appeared reasonable enough, as, forewarned of our demands for their surrender, they had, no doubt, attempted to secure safety by dispersion and flight. Punctual to his appointment, the Sultan met me at Alloola on the 13th. Lieutenant M'Hardy and I landed, and had an interview with him. He had brought all the plundered property he had been able to collect, consisting only of a few arms. The account he gave of the affair was precisely similar to what we had heard from other sources; he assured us that the assailants had only been fifteen in number, without counting women, who are generally as active as the men in an affray. He accounted for their having been able to overpower the sailors by stating that only five of the latter had used firearms, and that some of the rifles and revolvers had been lost in the whaleboat. This was confirmed, to a certain extent, by the rifles which were delivered up; they bore no appearance of having been fired, and the Somalis are too ignorant of the use of firearms to render it probable that they could have cleaned them. The remaining seamen, having only swords, were unable to use them against the Somalis on shore, or to contend against their spears, which they throw with great dexterity. Of the fifteen assailants, three, he assured me, had been killed, four had escaped to places beyond his jurisdiction, and the remaining eight he had brought, and were at my disposition. To estimate how much the Sultan had done in delivering up these culprits we must remember how many murders had been committed on our subjects since we had held possession of Aden, and that in no single instance have we ever succeeded in enforcing the surrender of the murderers. I determined that an immediate example should be made, and that, as the Sultan had tried and condemned the prisoners, only he should execute them. To this he offered no objection; and shortly before sunset the boats of both vessels proceeded to the shore, but the crews did not land. The prisoners were then brought down to the beach and decapitated. Amongst them was the chief elder of the clan to which they all belonged, also one of the two who had killed the last survivor on his way to Alloola. They all confessed their guilt, walked to the beach with steady pace, bent their necks to the sword, and met their death without a murmur.

Thus prompt and signal retribution was exacted, the honour of the British flag was vindicated, and it was made evident to the savage residents on the Somali coast that, while we never failed to reward services rendered to our subjects, we were no less prepared to avenge their wrongs.

## THE RED RAT'S DAUGHTER.

## CHAPTER XI.

**W**HEN Browne reached the Rue Jacquierie, after his receipt of the letter which had caused him so much pain and consternation, it was to learn that Katherine was not at home, and to find Madame Bernstein in her sitting-room sniffing vigorously at a bottle of smelling-salts and on the verge of hysterics. Seeing Browne, she sprang to her feet with a cry that was half one of relief and half of fear.

'Oh, Monsieur Browne,' said she, 'Heaven be praised that you have come! I have had such terrible trouble this morning, and have passed through such a scene with Katherine that my nerves are quite unstrung.'

'Where is Katherine?' Browne inquired almost angrily, and quite ignoring the description of her woes; 'and what is the meaning of the letter she wrote me this morning?'

'You must not be angry with her,' said madame, approaching and laying her hand gently upon his arm, while she looked up into his face with what was intended to be a piteous expression. 'The poor child is only doing what she deems to be right. You would not have her act otherwise, I know.'

'You understand my feelings, I think,' Browne replied bluntly. 'At the same time, I know how over-conscientious in such matters she is apt to be. Cannot I see her? Where is she?'

'She has gone out,' said madame, with a sigh. 'She and I, I am sorry to say, had a little disagreement this morning over her treatment of you. I know it was very wrong of me, and that you will hate me for it; but I could not help it. I could not let her spoil her own life and yours without uttering a protest. As a result, she did what she always does—that is to say, she put on her hat and cape, and went for a walk.'

'But have you no notion where I could find her?' asked Browne, who was beginning to feel that everything and everybody were conspiring against him. 'Has she any usual haunts where I should run a moderate chance of coming across her?'

'On that point I am afraid I can say nothing,' answered madame. 'She seldom takes me into her confidence. Yet, stay; I do remember having heard her once say that when she was put out by anything the only thing that could soothe her, and set her right again, was a visit to the picture galleries at the Louvre.'

'You are sure you know of no other place?' 'None whatever,' replied the lady. 'The pic-

tures at the Louvre are the only things in Paris in which she seems to take any interest. She is mad on the subject.'

'In that case I'll try the Louvre at once,' said Browne, picking up his hat.

'But let me first explain to you the reason of all that has happened,' said madame, stretching out her hand as if to detain him.

'Thank you,' Browne returned, with greater coldness than he had ever yet spoken to her; 'but, if you do not mind, I would rather hear that from her own lips.'

With that he bade madame good-bye, and made his way down to the street once more. From the Rue Jacquierie to the Louvre is not more than a ten minutes' drive at most—that is to say, if you proceed by the Avenue de l'Opéra—and yet to Browne it seemed as if he were hours in the cab. On entering the museum he made his way direct to the picture galleries. The building had not been long open, and for this reason only a few people were to be seen in the corridors, a circumstance for which Browne was devoutly thankful. It was not until he reached Room IV. that he knew he was not to have his journey in vain. Standing before Titian's 'Entombment of Christ,' her hands clasped before her, was Katherine. Her whole being seemed absorbed in enjoyment of the picture, and it was not until he was close to her that she turned and saw him. When she did he noticed that her face was very white and haggard, and that she looked as if she had not slept for many nights.

'Oh, why have you followed me?' she asked piteously.

'I have come to acknowledge in person the letter you sent me this morning,' he answered. 'Surely, Katherine, you did not think I should do as you asked me, and go away without even bidding you good-bye?'

'I hoped you would,' she answered, and her lips trembled as she uttered the words.

'Then you do not know me,' he replied, 'nor do you know yourself. No, darling; you are my affianced wife, and I refuse to go. What is more, I will not give you up, come what may. Surely you do not think that mine is such a fair-weather love that it must be destroyed by the first adverse wind? Try it and see.'

'But I cannot and must not try it,' she answered; and then she added, with such a weight of sorrow in her voice that it was as much as he could do to prevent himself from taking her in his arms and comforting her, 'Oh, you can have no idea how unhappy I am!'

'The more reason that I should be with you to comfort you, darling,' he declared. 'What am

I here for, if not to help you? You do not seem to have realised my proper position in the world. If you are not very careful, I shall pick you up and carry you off to the nearest parson, and marry you, willy-nilly; and after that you'll be obliged to put the management of your affairs in my hands, whether you want to or not.'

She looked at him a little reproachfully.

'Please don't joke about it,' she said. 'I assure you it is by no means a laughing matter to me.'

'Nor is it to me,' answered Browne. 'I should have liked you to have seen my face when I read your letter. I firmly believe I was the most miserable man in Europe.'

She offered no reply to this speech, and perhaps that was why a little old gentleman, the same old man in the threadbare black cloak and old-fashioned hat who haunts the galleries, and who entered at that moment, imagined that they were quarrelling.

'Come,' said the young man at last, 'let us find a place where we can sit down and talk unobserved. Then we'll thrash the matter out properly.'

'But it will be no use,' replied Katherine. 'Believe me, I have thought it out most carefully, and have quite made up my mind what I must do. Please do not ask me to break the resolutions I have made.'

'I will not ask you to do anything but love me, dear,' returned Browne. 'The unfortunate part of it is, you see, I also have made resolutions that you on your side must not ask me to break. In that case it seems that we have come to a deadlock, and the only way out of it is for us to start afresh, to discuss the matter thoroughly, and so arrive at an understanding. Come along; I know an excellent corner where we can talk without fear of being disturbed. Let us find it.'

Seeing that to protest would be useless, and deriving a feeling of safety from his masterfulness, she allowed him to lead her along the galleries until they reached the corner to which he had referred. No one was in sight, not even the little old man in the cloak, who was probably

gloating, according to custom, over the 'Venus del Pardo' in Room VI.

'Now let us sit down,' said Browne, pointing to the seat, 'and you must tell me everything. Remember, I have a right to know; and reflect also that, if there is any person in this wide world who can help you, it is I, your husband in the sight of God, if not by the law of man.'

He took her hand, and found that it was trembling. He pressed it within his own as if to give her courage.

'Tell me everything, darling,' he said—'everything from the very beginning to the end. Then I shall know how to help you. I can see that you have been worrying yourself about it more than is good for your health. Let me share the responsibility with you.'

She had to admit to herself that, after all, it was good to have a man to lean upon, to feel that such a pillar of strength was behind her. For this reason she unconsciously drew a little closer to him, as though she would seek shelter in his arms and defy the world from that place of security.

'Now let me have your story,' said Browne. 'Hide nothing from me; for only when I know all shall I be in a position to say how I am in a position to help you.'

He felt a shudder sweep over her as he said this, and a considerable interval elapsed before she replied. When she did her voice was harsh and strained, as if she were nervously herself to make an admission which she would rather not have allowed to pass her lips.

'You cannot imagine,' she said, 'how it pains me to have to tell you my pitiful tale. And yet I feel that I should be doing you a far greater wrong if I were to keep silence. It is not for myself that I feel this, but for you. Whatever may be my fate, whatever may come later, I want you always to remember that.'

'I will remember,' her lover replied softly. 'But you must not think of me at all, dear. I am content to serve you. Now tell me everything.'

Once more she was silent for a few moments, as though she was collecting her thoughts; then she commenced her tale.

#### THE ELIMINATION OF THE DRUNKARD.

**T**HERE are perhaps as many proposals for the solution of the drink problem as there are sides to the question. Inasmuch as the evil is one of the people's own choosing, it is suggested that a popularly elected body for the control of the drink traffic would have the effect of doing away with as much of it as, in their later experience of

it, they found to be desirable. Some say that the evils of the traffic are almost entirely due to the bad quality of alcoholic liquors on sale in the public-houses, and would have us believe that by the prevention of adulteration and by the enforced maturing of spirits we would be rid of drunkards. Others again say that no more need be done than simply to enforce the law as it at present exists, and drunkenness—at least in public—will soon be

a thing of the past. A certain number of persons, probably in a very small minority, would impose total prohibition upon the drunken community, whether the public wish it or not; and these and the Local Option party are not averse to a sacrifice of the opportunities of the many in order to save the drunken few. Lastly, there have always been some who have insisted that the only way to deal with drunkenness is to remove the drunkard. All attempts to deal with the question may be classified under one of three proposals: those which put restrictions upon the kind of liquor to be offered to the public, those which would put more restrictions upon the opportunities of the public to obtain liquor, and those which would put greater restrictions upon the drunkard. One is inclined to one or other of those methods according as one regards a moderate use of alcohol as desirable or not, and according as one interprets the principle of the liberty of the individual subject.

Perhaps it is true that the scientific men of the country and the medical profession have on the whole most strongly advocated the restriction of the drunkard. They have been telling us for many years now that there is a stage in drunkenness when the vice becomes a disease, when the drunkard should be called a patient, and when he can no more be held capable of choice or of self-restraint in the matter of drinking than an epileptic can be supposed capable of staving off a fit by an effort of will. Accordingly, it has been the constant recommendation of science and of medicine that the drunkard should be taken prisoner and segregated for a season in spite of himself. The value to the community of the removal of the drunkard from its midst is not to be measured only by the happy release which is bound to be felt when a most undesirable class of persons disappears. Nor is the gain to be regarded only as a relief to the ratepayer by the removal of an incubus on the parish. Even if all drunkards were summarily removed by death the gain to society would not only be here and now. Posterity might perhaps be considered to have gained even more than the generation from which the drunkards have been taken; for one of the worst features of the habit of excessive drinking is that it is in some sense hereditary.

In a recent work, *The Present Evolution of Man*, Dr Archdale Reid takes the view that the human being, regarded as an organism, is evolving chiefly in relation to infectious diseases and in relation to alcohol and other drugs. We can have no sort of surety that a person or a stock is able to survive any disease, or that immunity to it has been acquired, except by the slow process of experience and of survival of the fit. Similarly, we can have no surety that a family or a race will be strong to resist alcohol except the probability that immunity will follow upon an experience of it which eliminates the most weak. Now, though the effects of

alcohol are more slow and lingering than the effects of a disease such as that of smallpox, the immediate results are much more miserable. If drunkenness killed quickly there would be a speedy end to the trouble. But it does not; and in the process of drunkenness much misery comes to the drunkard, to society, and particularly to his family. The best we can hope is that, by some slow process of elimination of those who are weak in relation to alcohol, the race will be spared all those miseries which precede the death of the drunkard. The revised version of the inheritance of drunkenness is that the offspring of drunkards inherit a predisposition to fall victims to the habit to which the parents were predisposed before them. If drunkards, then, were removed from social life, if they did not marry and did not beget children, posterity would at least be spared that proportion of drunkenness which is due to inheritance. But a much more important consideration is that which refers to the effect upon the children of drunkards of growing up in a domestic environment which is drunken. These things are all a matter of opinion; but we are probably within the mark in saying that for one man who is born to drunkenness there are two or three who are educated to it by drunken parents. Fortunately this educational influence is one which a process of elimination of drunkards from social life will prevent even more than it will prevent the procreation of children born to drunkenness.

These considerations would be irrelevant and purely academic were it not that on the 1st of January 1899 there came technically, though not practically into operation until a little later, an act which, for the first time in the history of our constitution, explicitly aims at the elimination of the drunkard. The Inebriates Act, 1898, as it is to be called, is an act which provides for the detention in a reformatory, for a period not exceeding three years, of persons who have come into court because of crimes committed under the influence of drink, or to which drunkenness has contributed, and for a similar detention of offenders who have been convicted four times within a twelvemonth of acts of drunkenness which the law already regards as offences. The general effect upon society of the compulsory detention of these drunken criminals does not now concern us, nor need we now inquire into its effect upon the drunkard. We are dealing now with the effect upon posterity of the elimination of drunkards; and we may confidently hope that if this act is well administered it will lead to a great improvement in the chances of posterity in relation to alcohol in the two directions which we have indicated. The detention of habitual drunkards for the periods indicated may be expected to have but a slight effect upon their procreative capacity, and the effect in withdrawing the baneful influence of drunken parents from

the rising generation may not be of much greater importance; but we may be assured that this act, which was admitted by the Government at the time of its passing to be more or less tentative, opens the gate at which the scientists and doctors have been clamouring for years. If pains be taken to make this act successful, it will have paved the way for an act which will provide for the detention of all habitual drunkards, whether

criminal or not. Without doubt time will prove the necessity of extending the period of detention of those for whom a few years' segregation are found insufficient. Then posterity will have to bear all the blame of its drunkenness, because this generation will have taken the necessary precautions to eliminate from social life those who would otherwise come to be looked back upon as a drunken ancestry.

### THE UNIQUE MRS SPINK.

#### III.

O matters drifted on for a space, Albert congratulating himself on the effect of his timely word, and becoming more and more settled in his old-bachelor habits. His days were passed in regular routine. He rose at eight, breakfasted at eight-thirty, had a stroll round the garden, and took the nine-twenty-five train to town; lunched at one o'clock; and, leaving business for the day at five, dined at his club, and thereafter joined in a game of billiards, or, if the weather permitted, adjourned to play golf at Tooting Common. Occasionally he dined with some old friend, or went to the theatre. So that his daily occupation of Fairweather Villa began and ended between the hours of 9 P.M. and 9 A.M.

It was a placid, unemotional existence; and, knowing no other, he was contented. But, all unknown to Albert, a little cloud had arisen which threatened to overshadow him.

One glorious summer night he reached home in splendid spirits. His side had just won a hardly-contested foursome, and he owned the proud consciousness that never had he played better golf. There was no premonition of the thunderbolt which, modestly encased in an ordinary envelope, lay on the hall table awaiting him.

The enclosure was in Elizabeth's handwriting. Holding it under the hall lamp, Mr Spink succeeded in deciphering the careful penmanship:

DEAR MR ALBERT,—We are going to have another. Will you kindly let us know when you are suited and we shall leave.—Yours respectfully,

MR AND MRS LOPHAM.

Here was indeed a calamity!

Folks accustomed to change their maids monthly, and their dwellings every third year, can form no conception of what this threatened innovation meant to Albert Edward Spink, who had been born in Fairweather Villa, Balham, S.W., and to whose requirements the same servant had attended for many years.

That, under the circumstances, the Lopham family should remain was, of course, impossible.

Already they numbered four; and despite Elizabeth's vigilance and anxiety to keep her husband and family in the background, Mr Spink could not fail to be at times painfully conscious of their presence.

Little awkwardnesses darted across his memory. He had not forgotten that Sunday afternoon when Hackstraw, a City acquaintance, being in the neighbourhood, chanced to call, bringing with him his wife and sister. They were cosily chatting in the drawing-room, when young Jonathan, who was of an adventurous turn, took it upon himself to fall downstairs, landing, with a tremendous crash and a series of piercing yells, in the hall just outside the drawing-room door; Mrs Lopham had swiftly appeared and spirited her offspring away to the back premises, whence his howls, although softened by distance and intervening doors, still reached their ears.

He had found it distinctly annoying when Mrs Hackstraw prefixed her murmurs of sympathy with the remark that she had been under the impression that he was unmarried. It was disconcerting to be obliged to reply that it was the child of his housekeeper, who, with her husband, resided with him. He intercepted a glance Mrs Hackstraw exchanged with her husband, and felt that they pitied him for the foolish leniency which led to the possibility of such awkward occurrences.

Yes, the fiat had gone forth. The Lophams must go.

Albert smoked three pipes without coming to any definite decision regarding the best method of procedure towards the engaging of a new housekeeper, and finally resolved to take Mrs Thorneycroft's advice. She was an old friend, and a bright, sensible woman. She would be sure to counsel him aright.

#### IV.

HERE is nothing else for it. You must marry.'

Such was Mrs Thorneycroft's ultimatum, and it startled Mr Spink vastly.

'Marry!' he echoed, appalled.

'Yes, Albert. Why not? You should have married years ago. Do you never consider that, when men are so scarce, you are doing a positive injustice to womankind by remaining a bachelor?'

'Well, no. I must confess I never thought of it in that way.'

'You have been too comfortable, that's all. I am inclined to believe that this episode of the Lophams will turn out an admirable thing for you, after all, if it lures you on to matrimony.'

'But couldn't I get another housekeeper? I hoped that you might be good enough to engage one for me.'

'I shall, of course, if you wish it, Albert. But supposing I do, who is to teach her her duties, and see that she keeps the house as it should be?'

'It shouldn't be difficult for a capable woman. Half the rooms are locked up. I only use three, and, except on Sundays, merely breakfast at home.'

'Well, I'll do what you ask. But I am certain you would be happier with a nice wife.'

And somehow, after thinking the matter over, Mr Spink found himself veering round to Mrs Thorneycroft's point of view. It would certainly be pleasant to have a sympathetic wife. It was dismal coming home in the evenings and finding no one with whom he could discuss his affairs. If he did marry he would dine at home, too: the reiteration peculiar to the club menus wearied him.

There was a strong strain of romance in Albert's nature, albeit his prosaic mode of life had allowed it to lie untuned; and, as the idea grew upon him, he began unconsciously to build castles in the air.

His wife would sit opposite him as they breakfasted in his cosy dining-room, and be at hand to give him a cup of tea when he reached home in the afternoon. Then they would have a game of tennis or golf, and a dainty little dinner, followed by some music.

He opened the old cottage piano whereon his chubby infant fingers had learned to play 'Listen to the Mocking-bird' and 'Life let us Cherish.' It had been silent since his mother died, and some of the yellow keys struck dumb.

The sweet, feeble music of the notes thrilling his nerves brought a little rush of emotion, and for the first time he realised how lonely and self-centred his life had been.

With a wife to share his interests all would be changed. They would not stagnate as he had been content to do. Together they would gather up the threads of some dropped friendships, and make new ones, and a pleasant exchange of hospitality would follow. He would not devote himself so exclusively to business as hitherto. His circumstances permitted him to take a holiday when he listed. They would often escape the London fogs by spending a day or two at

Hastings or Bournemouth, and each autumn they would do a little Continental travelling.

Hastily writing a line to Mrs Thorneycroft requesting her to take no steps about engaging a housekeeper for him until he had seen her, he ran out and posted the missive, then retired to rest, feeling happier in the prospect of the future change than a few hours earlier he would have deemed possible.

It was with a new spirit of adventure that Mr Spink awoke next morning, and he was conscious of making a more than usually careful toilet. Though even to himself he would not acknowledge it, he had the feeling that now any moment might bring him into the presence of the woman who was fated to share the remainder of his life; so that it behoved him to appear at his best.

In response to Elizabeth's questioning look, he replied that he had received their note, and that other arrangements were in progress. He would let her know when they were completed.

At the station he found himself viewing with a new interest the few young ladies who were on the platform while he waited for his train.

His morning's work was despatched with unusual alacrity, and, after a hurried lunch, he took a hansom and sped westwards to Mrs Thorneycroft's mansion in Kensington.

Fortune favoured him, for his mentor was at home, and alone.

Albert did not waste a moment in beating about the bush.

'My dear friend,' he made frank avowal, 'I am going to take your advice. I have resolved to marry.'

'Now that's *delightful*. Albert, I am rejoiced. Who is the happy woman?'

'Well, really,' Mr Spink laughed a trifle sheepishly, 'that is for you to say. I must confess I haven't the most remote idea!'

Mrs Thorneycroft fairly sparkled with delight. Here, then, was a task after her own heart.

'I know lots of awfully nice women, and I'm certain you could find a perfectly suitable wife among them. Tell me what qualifications your ideal woman must have.'

'Well, she must be nice-looking.'

'Of course.'

'And good-tempered.'

'Surely.'

'And I would like an intellectual woman. Not a frivolous one.'

'Yes.'

'If she were musical, that would be an attraction.'

'Yes.'

'And her relatives must be desirable; I would not like her to have too many or disreputable ones.'

'An orphan preferred. Go on.'

'I always admire tall women, and slender.'

Mrs Thorneycroft's figure being tall and slender, not to say attenuated, she answered cheerfully, 'Very good. Proceed. You would like one of a suitable age, of course?'

'Yes, of course, about?—'

'Well, about?—'

'Oh, perhaps twenty-three or so.'

'Oh!' said Mrs Thorneycroft, but her emphasis escaped Albert's notice. He was too much engrossed in building up his ideal goddess to remark the slight touch of sarcasm which leavened her 'Oh!'

'And I am to find the lady. Now let us sum up. She must be young—as matters go nowadays twenty-three is as young as eighteen was in my girlhood; she must be pretty, and tall and slender, good-tempered and clever, musical and intellectual, and have no objectionable relatives. The unique Mrs Spink! My dear Albert, I sincerely wish you may get her!'

'Why? Don't you know of any girls who have these requirements?' he asked anxiously, a little disturbed by her badinage. 'I'm sure you must know lots.'

'Oh yes! I am only jesting. I know plenty of charming girls.' Mrs Thorneycroft was of a sympathetic disposition, and hated giving pain, so she did not add, as a more candid and less tactful friend might have done, 'but perhaps they won't wish to marry you.' She decided to see that Albert had a fair selection, and the result would be his concern, not hers.

'We go up the river to our little bungalow on Friday. Suppose you visit us there from Saturday till Monday. I won't promise anything, but—'

And Mr Spink left Cromwell Gardens with the conviction that the romance of his life was dated to begin on the following Saturday.

## NOVELISTS I HAVE KNOWN.

By T. H. S. ESCOTT, Author of *Personal Forces of the Period*, &c.



NOTICEABLY handsome clerical couple—the clergyman himself slight, tall, with fine features, clear voice, an abundance of light silken hair, reminding, as it used to be said, the Somersetshire villagers of Absalom; the lady glorying in a wavy profusion of golden locks. Here is the first dim memory belonging to the present writer of a once popular novelist. The clergyman himself was curate of a little village outside Bridgwater some time during the first fifty years of this century. He was a striking preacher, and much thought of by the connoisseurs of sermons from the neighbouring town. In those far-off years Mr and Mrs Gordon Smythies were undoubtedly chief notabilities in that part of the western county. There was close logic as well as flow of words in the sermons of the gentleman. There were brightness, briskness, and study of the lighter aspects of life in the novels of the lady. These were the fictions that, rivalling the popularity of Mrs Gore, prefigured as well as perhaps inspired a more pretentious school of later novelists of society. *The Marrying Man*, *The Flirt*, and so forth were the titles of these unsophisticated, rather flimsy, but morally harmless romances. Mrs Gordon Smythies was enough of a contemporary with Mrs Gore to be able to repudiate the charge of being her imitator or even disciple. Her husband, the Rev. Yorick Smythies, had seen the world both at college and in society, and had lived with well-known people; he was thus more likely than any literary teacher of that period to have eked out the knowledge of his wife from his own reminiscences. The mother of

the golden-haired Mrs Smythies was also a bright, well-informed, experienced old lady; her son, too, a pupil of the clergyman in his Oxford reading, had known what was then not called society, but the *beau monde*. The appetite for Ouida's more finished romances in the early sixties had doubtless been in part created between one and two decades before by Mrs Gordon Smythies. The earlier writer, too, was like the later, poet as well as novelist. In some verses wanting neither in power nor grace, and for a short while much in the vogue, Mrs Smythies described those marshy, unhealthy flats of Tuscany which gave Miss de la Ramée a title for one of her novels. Probably when Ouida christened her book *Maremma* she had never heard of, still less read, the poem of the old-world society novelist. She will probably learn for the first time of the coincidence in title as a very trifling curiosity of literature. The Quantock district of Somerset—that now spoken of—has always been proud of, perhaps even still lives on, the literary traditions that have descended to it from the sojourn there of Coleridge and Wordsworth.

Another name, immortalised at least by Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, has more lately associated itself with the fiction-writers of the western county. The Capell Lofft who was the literary founder of his family had been the patron of poets, especially of Bloomfield, the bard of the *Farmer's Boy*, not less than the friend of members of what was called the Lake School. His descendant, vividly recalled as she is by the present writer, was, as Mrs Irwin, the wife of the rector of Charllynch, a village some few miles from the home of Mrs Gordon

Smythies. This daughter of the house of Loft, a cultivated person, excelled as a conversationalist, and essayed fiction with far more than local success. Hers were not society novels; they showed close observation of life by an original mind. Without the inner knowledge of smart life in Violet Fane's *Sophy*, their social satire gave a foretaste of the bitter-sweet flavour which, perfected by Violet Fane, leaves a taste as of olives on the literary palate.

On the road between Bridgwater and Petherton is, or was, a square, roomy building known as Ham House. Periodical and always unfulfilled rumour attributed to Thackeray an intention of renting this residence. Even without him the county in the days now mentioned was proud of its reputation for novelists.

The last election at Bath in the fifties brought into juxtaposition a fairly well-known novel-writer, and the supposed original of a far better known novel character. The architect of the Royal Exchange, Sir William Tite (knighted in 1869), is always said to have given Dickens some hints for the character of Pecksniff in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Mr Tite had already represented the Somerset capital in 1855. When, in 1857, he sought re-election, there was standing together with him the urbane, dignified, and universally accomplished possessor of Clevedon Court. About this time Sir Arthur Hallam had written a novel which had set every one talking between the Avon and the Tamar. The book was called *Below the Surface*; its subject was the Ritualistic section in the Church of England; its motto, I think, was a line of Juvenal,\* tellingly adapted to the domestic danger of the confession-hearing Anglican priest in the family. Of benevolence at least equal to his wealth, of the most perfect breeding, of the most unruffled amiability, Sir Arthur Elton was not the man, as every one knew, to use his talents or his commanding position to attack, save on public grounds, any interest or individual. The exposure of Puseyism, as it was then called, in its domestic aspects, was undertaken as a public duty, though pointed perhaps by private experiences. Neither the Oxford secessions nor Lord John Russell's Durham letter incriminating the High Anglicans were then ancient history. The fiction was a telling commentary on the historic facts. Such was the stir it made that two three-volume editions were sold off in a couple of weeks. Sir Arthur Elton's hospitalities had in the south the same sort of fame as those of Sir William Stirling Maxwell in the north. Tennyson, Gladstone, and indeed all persons of promise or distinction visiting the west were guests at Clevedon Court. Bath had then a number of small, very select literary clubs and societies, dating at least from the days of Beau Nash. At these Sir Arthur Elton's genial dignified presence, ready knowledge,

and rare conversational power made him a central figure—reflected, indeed, distinction on the place. But the memorable enthusiasm of some of his public receptions during 1857 were chiefly due to the fact of his having hit the taste of the county, in some degree of the country too, between the wind and water. Religious feeling in Bath was then, as it has often been, largely Evangelical. Sir Arthur Elton's *Below the Surface* was welcomed as the social gospel of a new Evangelical crusade, in a place whose traditions generally have been Low Church.

Intellectually not less than physically the most notable Bath novelist was a very interesting, original, and well-informed man, who recently died at Brighton, the Rev. James Pycroft. The Hatchard's of Bath was then the shop of a bookseller in Bridge Street, named Peach. Overtopping the little crowd of gentlemen and ladies on these well-known premises, Mr Pycroft's tall, thin, but well-knit and upright figure, clerically clad though not clerically occupied, seemed that of the intellectual oracle of Bath between thirty and forty years ago. As the author of *The Cricket Field*, he was also a classical authority on the national game; in the field of the Lansdowne Club, by the side of the Avon, he passed many summer afternoons. Here he predicted the national fame of the brothers Grace, of whom in those days the most famous, I think, was E. M. But Mr Pycroft foretold that it was W. G. Grace who would furnish the most formidable batsman ever yet sent forth from the west of England. In his earlier days Mr Pycroft had been a master at Cheltenham College, as well as a beneficed clergyman in North Devon. For many years he filled at Bath the place already described, that of a sort of universal referee in educational or literary matters. Suddenly he astonished many, interested others, and delighted some, himself especially, by appearing as a novelist. His story of *Agony Point*, a genially didactic satire on modern extravagance, was certain to have been full of good things, for Mr Pycroft was quite as well read as was the author of that volume of encyclopedic gossip and ana called *Lacon*, which is none the less useful although probably to-day almost forgotten. But Mr Pycroft's friends were not prepared for such clear delineation of character and such fresh domestic satire as the novel contained. The author's name seems to have been withheld from the earlier copies, when, greatly to his delight, some rumours attributed it to Anthony Trollope, and Mr Pycroft gracefully acknowledged the work, much to the satisfaction of the reading public of Bath and Cheltenham. After a short sojourn in London this novelist settled in Brighton.

That town then had a little literary society of its own, not unlike that of Bath, chiefly organised by the Misses Horace Smith, sisters of the authors of *Rejected Addresses*. Sometime during the seventies these kind ladies gave a dinner-party in Mr Pycroft's honour, Anthony Trollope and

\* *Ecce domus secreta volunt atque inde timeri.*

Robert Browning, then on a visit to Brighton, being among the guests. The talk was less literary than the good hostesses might have liked. Trollope blustered out a paradox denying the educational value of Greek. Browning, who had just translated the *Eschylean* trilogy, asked Pycroft, as a classical scholar, his opinion on the version, which some thought to be rather more obscure than the original; the divine diplomatically parried the question by leading back the conversation to Trollope's original statement. In deference to a meek young divine who, fresh from Oxford, kept a school in Regency Square, the rest of the talk centred entirely round the merits or the reverse of the public school *Latin Grammar*, which (1871) had not then long appeared.

Universal dissent was a common feature of kind-hearted, grumbling Anthony Trollope's talk. 'I utterly disagree with you; what was it you were saying?' Such was the comment and inquiry that followed each other after a pause in a late evening's talk, during which Trollope seemed to have been dozing. No man doing with such zeal all he engaged in took himself less seriously than Trollope; even his falls in the hunting-field elicited many more laughs from himself than from any who witnessed them. His kindness was unbounded; but he never let the left hand know what the right hand did. When a literary friend died in difficulties and his books were going to the hammer, Trollope literally intercepted them on their way to the auctioneer's, insisted on paying for them on his own lavish valuation, provided that the widow never knew who was the purchaser. Of all comparatively recent novelists, Trollope admired Whyte-Melville most. Of that finished man of the world as well as literary artist, one characteristic remark made at dinner in a Warwickshire country house can never be forgotten by those who heard it. 'If,' he said, half-soliloquising over the day's incidents in the hunting-field, 'I was asked to give a piece of advice to a young man just starting in life, it would be: "Ride straight to hounds, and never talk!"' Trollope loved Ireland, where he had first learned to ride and write, and almost adored her great novelist, Charles Lever. Once, and once only, I met these two men together, at the house in County Galway of a very popular, clever, and agreeable Irishman who then sat for the county, who afterwards served his country in responsible offices abroad, and who in his later years was one of the most welcome figures in London society. As host to Lever and Trollope in those days, he made no secret of his ancestral fortunes having declined. There were rumours—a very old story—of the half-liveried servants waiting at dinner being sheriff's officers in disguise. 'In your father's day,' observed Trollope to the host, 'his people would have taught an unwelcome visitor, on whatever plea, it was as much as his life was worth to push past the lodge gate.' 'I very much fear,' rejoined Lever across the

walnuts and the wine, holding up as he spoke his nut-crackers pistol-wise, 'all that sort of thing has gone long out of date.' Anthony Trollope often told this story, imitating the gesture with the nut-crackers, in later years; but by that time, I think, the phrase which struck him—'all that sort of thing'—and its inner meaning, had been put by Lever into one of his stories or gossiping *Blackwood* papers. It has been said of Trollope that he could work equally well at any time. The truth is, as J. A. Froude once remarked, there was never an hour in his 'banging-about life' when he was not at work; whether he were pounding on his stout old cob for his morning ride in Rotten Row, or playing his afternoon rubber at the Garrick, his thoughts seldom wandered far from the situation or the phrase which was to be the keynote of his next chapter. Only late in life did he lighten his unending labour by the help of an amanuensis, and then only because of an accident physical and domestic. He had sprained his hand. A niece of his wife was staying in his house in Manchester Square. When, according to his habit, he descended to his study just as the housemaid was about to light the fire, he found he could only use his pen with some pain. The housemaid was sent up to ask the young lady to come down as soon as might be. Trollope found the work of dictation unexpectedly easy; his niece soon took up her abode beneath his roof, and to the day of his death he never employed any other amanuensis, nor ever wrote another novel with his own hand.

He knew, of course, at his clubs and in general society every one worth knowing. His two great friends at the Garrick and elsewhere were Millais, whose pencil had so happily portrayed his best heroines, and Sir Henry James, to-day Lord James of Hereford, who perpetually appears in many of the political sketches of his later novels, and whom he had expected to see Lord Chancellor before he died. Among literary workers he saw most of Edward Pigott, the late dramatic censor, and Mr Edward Dicey, who in the later sixties had acted with him in the editorship of *St Paul's Magazine*. In general company his brightness and temper were apt both to be uncertain. As his frequent guest in Manchester Square, the present writer is but one of several who found him invariably the pleasantest of hosts and the staunchest of friends.

The recent death of Mrs Lynn Linton may be compared to that of Trollope in 1882, in that it has been followed by the break-up of one of the most interesting of little literary societies. The dinner-parties of Sir — and Lady — were often the most representative of intellectual gatherings. Mr Henry James and other cultivated Americans first made their *début* there, while the author of *Joshua Davidson* seldom was absent. Neither for those nor the Manchester Square hospitalities have there yet been found in the whirl and

multitude of London entertainments any exact successors. Anthony Trollope and Mrs Lynn Linton both had the gift of penetrating with their very different personalities the company in which they were. Mrs Linton was a real intellectual centre in those friendly gatherings at which was

found the best professional and absolutely the most intellectual society in London. Now she is removed those parties are no more; while, whether in club, in country house, or family party, Anthony Trollope's place still shows no sign of being filled.

### THE LABOUR CONDITIONS OF A BRITISH COLONY.



THE 'Labour Problem' is assuming year by year a graver aspect. The continual recurrence of strikes and the wide publicity given to the arguments of the strikers in the press are creating in the minds of those who are watching the signs of our modern progress a feeling that a time is not far distant when the whole question of labour relations will have to be reconsidered from an entirely new standpoint.

On the one hand, the employer feels that a continual effort is being made to limit his authority, to dictate to him the conditions under which his capital can be employed; and an increased feeling of uneasiness is abroad amongst this class as to the probability of strikes seriously interfering with its plans at a time when large contracts are in course of fulfilment, involving, in the case of non-performance, heavy penalties and serious loss.

On the other hand, the labourer sees that under present conditions he has in his hands a very effective weapon with which to insist on what he believes to be his rights; and as the limit of these rights is extending, the use of this weapon of organised strikes is becoming more frequent. I will not attempt in this article to determine in how far right lies with one side or the other, but will give a brief history of the labour struggle in one of the British colonies.

The Emancipation Act was published in British Guiana on October 19, 1833, and on August 1, 1824, all the slaves became apprenticed labourers. It was confidently predicted by the abolitionist party in England that when the slaves were freed they would work on as before, only with a redoubled energy bred of the proud consciousness that they were no longer slaves.

During the period of apprenticeship signs were not wanting which indicated to all except those who wilfully refused to recognise the facts that a very different state of things would prevail after August 1, 1838 (Emancipation Day), than had been hoped for. Notwithstanding the fact that the working-hours of the labourers were reduced during the time of apprenticeship, several riots occurred, and great difficulty was found in getting the work of the plantations satisfactorily done.

As time passed this difficulty became greater

and greater; and at length, in 1836, the planters began to import labour. That this should have been necessary when the number of labourers in the colony was amply sufficient to perform the work of the estates is a striking proof of the change which had already begun to make itself felt.

In 1836 and 1837 labourers were imported from the British Isles, the United States, and Germany; but it was found that the climatic conditions were such as to render white labour, except such as came from Southern Europe, useless. In 1838 Lord Glenelg, at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, proposed to send out to British Guiana a batch of youthful offenders who were imprisoned on their first conviction; but the proposal met with no encouragement.

So pressing did the need for labourers become that as Emancipation Day drew near labourers were brought from Madeira, Barbadoes, St Lucia, Anguilla, St Kitts, Nevis, St Barts, St Helena, Sierra Leone, and Rio de Janeiro. These labourers were imported at the expense of the planters, and were bound by contract to work on the estates for a fixed period, at a fixed rate of pay. In addition to the labour derived from the above sources, 406 coolies from Calcutta arrived in the colony in 1838, under the following terms: Sirdars to receive seven rupees a month, and ordinary labourers five rupees (fourteen and ten shillings respectively, the rupee not having depreciated at that time). Daily rations were to be provided free to all—one pound and a half of rice, with salt, ghee, dhall, or peas. Clothing was to be furnished on landing, and afterwards annually. In return for these considerations, the coolies were to work every day from sunrise to sunset, with an interval of three hours in the heat of the day, and on Sundays until nine in the morning.

It is a striking fact that these terms were almost exactly the same as those under which the slaves themselves were working before the passing of the Emancipation Act. An Order in Council dated November 2, 1831, containing one hundred and thirty-one sections, regulated the treatment of the slaves in the most minute manner, providing that a regular supply of food according to a fixed tariff should be given weekly to each slave, that certain articles of clothing should be furnished yearly, and that parents and children or husband and wife were not to be separated except with

their own consent. Every owner of more than forty slaves was compelled to engage the services of a medical practitioner, whose duty it was to inspect the slaves at least once a fortnight, and enter the result of his inspection in a book provided for the purpose.

In order that the law should be carried out, a Protector of Slaves was appointed by the government, and this official and his subordinates were empowered to visit any estate without warning, and inspect the slaves. No slave could be punished in any way without an entry being made in the Record Book, which was open at all times to the Protector. In order to render any abuse of the law impossible, each slave had the legal right of leaving an estate without permission from his owner in order to lay any complaint before the Protector.

It cannot for a moment be doubted that the interests of the slaves were far more carefully guarded than those of the early immigrants. At length emancipation came, and with it a period of the utmost depression in all branches of industry. Cotton and coffee had been articles of export on a large scale. Of the former the annual export reached seven million pounds; of the latter, eight million pounds. After emancipation these two industries perished for want of reliable labour, the last bale of cotton leaving the colony in 1843, and the last bag of coffee in 1846.

In order that the colony might not be absolutely ruined, it was determined to organise a regular system of immigration, and arrangements were concluded with the Indian government which led, in 1845, to the commencement of a yearly importation of East Indian labourers, which with the exception of two years—1849 and 1850—has continued down to the present time.

This system of immigration is under government control; and as four-fifths of all work done in the colony to-day is done by imported labour, I propose to describe the system in detail.

Everything in connection with immigration passes through the Immigration Department. At the head of this is the Immigration Agent-General, and under him are the sub-agents and interpreters, as well as a large staff of clerks. Every one in this office above the rank of an ordinary clerk must be proficient in at least one Indian dialect, those generally used being Hindi, Urdu, and Tamil. In Calcutta resides the Immigration Agent for India, an official of the British Guiana government. His duty is to recruit immigrants and attend to their shipment. The recruiting agents travel about the country and collect a number of men and women who are willing to accept the terms offered them. These are then despatched to Calcutta, where they are received at the Immigration Depôt. Here they are fed and clothed for some weeks, during which time they are under medical inspection. At length, when the time comes for embarkation, a final inspection takes

place, and those who are found unfit are sent back to their homes.

Any immigrant who may have young children is allowed to take them out to the colony at the colony's expense, and they are not placed on the register as indentured immigrants. On the day of sailing there is a muster of the immigrants at the dépôt, and the terms of the agreement are read over to the people in batches of twenty at a time, and if any one wishes to draw back he can do so. The indenture sheet is then signed, and each immigrant is given a copy of his agreement signed by the agent, whose signature binds the employer in the colony to fulfil the conditions. The conditions are printed on the back of each agreement in three dialects. The immigrants are then marched to the ship in batches—first the married people, then the single women, and then the single men. (I use the term immigrant throughout, as I am writing from the standpoint of a resident in British Guiana.) Here they are received by the doctor of the ship, who calls a muster and checks each name on his list.

The doctor has full authority and responsibility during the voyage, and no order of any kind affecting the immigrants can be given without his consent. The vessels used for transporting the immigrants are fast-sailing ships, chartered for the purpose by the colonial government. Minute regulations are in force which govern every detail of the voyage to Georgetown, the capital of British Guiana. The 'tween-decks are divided into three spaces, the single men occupying the forward division, the married people the next, and the single women the after-division. The whole ship is free to the immigrants, the poop, however, being reserved for the women. The passage over is always made as comfortable as possible for every one; and as the captain and officers each receive a bonus for every immigrant landed, the greatest care is taken to keep the ship thoroughly clean and the ventilation in good order.

The food to be supplied during the passage is fixed by law and on a scale of the utmost liberality. Fresh meat and vegetables, soup and rice and curry, form the principal items on the menu. Every day the doctor makes his rounds of inspection, in the morning and again in the evening; and any complaints are heard and investigated.

When the ship arrives in Georgetown the Immigration Agent-General comes on board and inspects the immigrants, and also receives the report of the voyage from the doctor. In this report are entered the births and deaths, and the particulars of any cases treated in the ship's hospital. As soon as convenient the immigrants are landed and marched up to the Immigration Depôt, where they are given quarters until they are despatched to the various estates.

The system of allotment is as follows: Each estate which requires immigrants sends in a re-

quisition to the Agent-General stating the number of immigrants wanted. As the number asked for is always greater than the number available for allotment, the Agent-General determines how many are to be sent to each estate, and the managers are notified accordingly.

The terms of contract between the immigrant and the employer are fixed by law, and the Agent-General has the power to refuse immigrants to any estate on which he believes the immigrants are not being treated satisfactorily.

The employer has to furnish house-room to the immigrants free of cost, and no immigrants are allotted to any estate until the medical inspector has visited the dwelling-houses, and made an entry in a book kept for the purpose to the effect that the houses are built in a manner which fulfils the sanitary requirements laid down in the regulations.

Each estate has to provide a hospital capable of accommodating a certain percentage of all the immigrants on the estate. The hospital is to be in charge of a certified dispenser, who must live on the spot. Three times a week the government medical officer visits the hospital and examines each patient. Every case must be entered by him in the hospital book, with such particulars as to treatment as will serve to guide the dispenser. Every prescription is entered by the doctor in this book. At the termination of each visit the doctor signs the hospital book, and is held responsible by the government for the accuracy of the entries made.

Every indentured immigrant has the right of consulting the doctor, remaining in the hospital whilst sick, and receiving food, clothing, and medicine as long as he is there; and for this he pays nothing. In addition to this, the women can go to the hospital to be confined, and the doctor is compelled to perform any operations that may be necessary.

In order to give some idea of the extent to which the hospitals are used, I may mention that in the year ending 31st March 1896 the number of cases treated in the estates-hospitals was 124,326. Each estate must provide a school for the young children of the immigrants, and this privilege is also enjoyed free of charge.

The law fixes a minimum rate of wages—twenty-four cents for men and sixteen cents for women. Although this rate of pay seems very low, yet in reality it is not so, as it leaves a very considerable margin for saving, the expense of living being very small. In support of this statement I may refer to the official report of the Immigration Department for the year ending 31st March 1896, which shows that the 2089 immigrants who returned to India in the year under review carried with them \$119,289. The amount of money taken out of the colony by returning immigrants reaches in all the considerable sum of \$3,240,000.

After serving five years under indenture, and remaining five years longer in the colony, each immigrant can claim a passage back to India on payment of one-fourth of the actual expense in the case of men, and one-sixth in the case of women. In return for these considerations the immigrant agrees to work five days a week, for seven hours in the fields or ten hours in the factory.

The whole of the relation between the immigrant and his employer is covered by the Immigration Ordinance (No. 25, of 1891), and in all cases where difficulties arise the magistrate's court must be visited. The employer has no legal right to inflict a punishment of any kind whatever. If an immigrant refuses to work, a summons must be taken out against him. The case is tried by the magistrate as a civil matter, and the ordinary rules of procedure are observed. The offence must be proved by witnesses, and the defendant can, if he chooses, employ a lawyer to conduct his case. This is frequently done when the charge is a serious one.

If any immigrant has a cause of complaint against his employer or his employer's agents, he can go directly either to the nearest magistrate or to the Immigration Agent-General and state his case; and he has the legal right of leaving the estate without permission in order to do this. If the magistrate or the Agent-General thinks that the man has a just cause, either of them can issue a free summons against the person complained of.

The above facts present the conditions which prevail in regard to labour on the sugar estates of British Guiana. The report of the West India Royal Commission, published in October 1897, shows that of the total exports from British Guiana sugar formed 94 per cent, after deducting the value of the gold export. It will thus be seen that the labour question is practically confined to the sugar estates.

The way in which the expenses of the immigration system are met has been much criticised in recent years, many people holding the view that the whole population of the colony is being taxed for the benefit of the planters. To take the figures for the colony's financial year 1895-96, the total cost of immigration was \$461,284, of which \$300,444 represented expenses of introduction and establishments, and \$160,840 the cost of the medical service. Of the total sum the planters paid directly into the Treasury in cash and promissory notes \$153,761, and the balance was paid out of the general funds of the colony. Thus the planters bore one-third and the colony two-thirds of the immigration expenses.

The question naturally suggests itself whether it is fair to make the general public pay for the maintenance of a system of immigration which apparently benefits only one section of the community. At first sight one might be inclined to say

that such an arrangement was far from just, but a closer examination of the position puts the matter in a very different light. The total export trade of the colony for the year 1895-96, excluding gold, was valued at \$5,846,400, and of this sum sugar represented \$5,630,400. It will be seen from these figures that the sugar industry is the backbone of the colony, and that any circumstance affecting the industry would affect in a corresponding degree the welfare of the entire population. As the sugar estates are entirely dependent for their labour on the continuance of East Indian immigration, and as it would be absolutely impossible for the planters to bear the total cost of the system, the charging to general revenue of a portion of the cost of immigration was the only alternative to an entire collapse of the colony.

Apart from this, it is to be noted that, as the revenue of the colony is raised almost entirely from duties on imports, excise duty on rum, and retail spirit licences, the East Indians themselves, who form nearly half the population, pay as consumers a large proportion of the sum devoted to defraying immigration expenses.

The continued importation of East Indians has had a very marked effect on the census returns. In 1841 the population of the colony was composed of 90,900 black and coloured; 2219 Portuguese from Madeira; 2162 Scotch, English, and Irish; 403 French, Dutch, and Germans; 343 East Indians; and 159 North Americans; with about 1300 unclassified. It is not clear whether the aboriginal Indians are included in the above returns. In 1891 the population was made up as follows: Black and mixed races, 141,184; Africans, 3433; East Indians, 105,463; Portuguese, 12,166; Chinese, 3714; Europeans other than Portuguese, 4558; aborigines, 7463; not stated, 347. Thus in the fifty years 1841-91 the ratio of the East Indians to the rest of the population changed from one in every three hundred to three in every eight.

The black and coloured races are very much averse to manual labour, and this feature of their character becomes more marked year by year. It is attributed to various causes. Some observers set it down to the natural laziness of the people; others maintain that it is the result of the wide spread of education, with the accompanying desire for social elevation, which, acting together, tend to make field-work unpopular; another class of apologists ask, 'Why should a man work if he can live on the bountiful supplies of nature?'

Whatever be the cause, the fact remains that the colony has to send thousands of miles for labourers, whilst the majority of the natives are sitting idle. What the final result will be is not difficult to foresee. The East Indian, frugal and saving in his habits, careful of his children, setting great store by family ties, will eventually stamp out the native population, who, although

possessing many virtues and of hardier physique, are idle and improvident, and are so careless of their children that infant mortality forms one-fifth of the death-rate of the colony.

#### SUNSET.

ALL alone I pass to-day  
'Neath the pinewood's rugged arches,  
While the sunset's level ray,  
Piercing through the slend'rer latches,  
Flecks with gold the mossy way.

Once, on such a day, you know,  
Through such pines we climbed together—  
She and I: how long ago!—  
While across the purpling heather  
Stole the sunset's deep'ning glow.

Towards the solemn verge of day  
Mountains rose in stateliest order;  
At our feet the brimming Spey  
Flashed between each grassy border  
Loitering on its dreamy way.

There we talked till day was gone  
From the knoll among the heather;  
And the wild bees' murmured drone  
Still recalls that hour together,  
Now I walk at eve alone.

How her gracious presence filled  
All the pauses of my dreaming  
With a glad content, that thrilled  
Half my life to fairer seeming,  
And my restless spirit stilled.

What although a silence fell  
On our lips; our thoughts were meeting,  
For we loved, I think, too well  
To require much speech, repeating  
What our hearts could better tell.

At her side the world looked bright,  
In her eyes all hope shone clearer;  
And for that sweet evening's light  
Now I hold all sunsets dearer,  
Though I walk alone to-night.

M. GRAHAM.

#### \* \* TO CONTRIBUTORS.

- 1st. All communications should be addressed 'To the Editor, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.'
- 2d. For its return in case of ineligibility, postage-stamps should accompany every manuscript.
- 3d. To secure their safe return if ineligible, ALL MANUSCRIPTS, whether accompanied by a letter of advice or otherwise, should have the writer's Name and Address written upon them IN FULL.
- 4th. Poetical contributions should invariably be accompanied by a stamped and directed envelope.